

III. REMARKS

Claims 1-30 are pending in this application. Applicants do not acquiesce in the correctness of the rejections and reserve the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected claims not specifically addressed. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-6, 8-16, 18-23 and 25-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Hansen et al. (US 2003/00142399); and claims 7, 17, 24 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hansen et al., in view of Niguyen et al. (USPN 6,721,729). Applicants submit that the pending claims are allowable and thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections for the reasons stated below.

With regarding to independent claims 1, 11, 18 and 25, Hansen et al. do not disclose each and every claimed feature and thus do not anticipate the current invention. Specifically, the current invention includes, *inter alia*, "generating a list of search results ordered by a ranking in response to the web search, wherein the ranking is based on at least one *nomination* previously made by a member of the user group[.]" as recited in claim 1 and claimed similarly in claims 11, 18 and 25. Applicants submit that Hansen et al. do not disclose this feature. Hansen et al. disclose "[a] method for organizing records of a database by topical relevance" that is determined by statistics on relevance. (Abstract). Specifically, the Hansen et al. method monitors the frequency of a search terms used, a search path traversed, and records reviewed by members of a user community. In the Hansen et al. method, the most frequently used search term, search path and most frequently reviewed records are deemed most relevant. (Abstract). In the Hansen et al. method, however, a user plays little role in the determination of search

results besides affecting the frequency a record is accessed by accessing the records. (See, page 4, paragraph 0040, "[w]e maintain a table of the number of times each record was accessed in response to each search term issued by a community of users.") That is, the Hansen et al. method is based purely on statistics and not on a subjective "nomination" made by a user. By sharp contrast, in the current invention, search results (records) are listed by an order of a ranking, the ranking being based on at least one nomination previously made by a member of a user group.

The term "nomination" in the context of the present is when "members of a group generate nomination data by 'nominating' web pages that they believe, for example, should be ranked with a high priority in future search results, excluded from future search results, or made available in future searches only to group members." (Page 6 of the application). (Emphasis added). That is, in the current invention, a member of a user group can make a subjective decision (i.e., nomination) regarding the ranking of a record, and the decision affects the search results or the order of listing of search results in a future search by a user of the group. Thus, a nomination is not the same thing as merely accessing a record. Instead, as the term is defined, nomination involves a user making a subjective judgment about the usefulness of a search result.

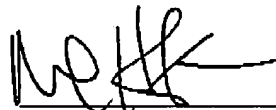
Thus, using nomination, a user can among other things exclude a record if the user finds that the record is not an appropriate record for the search; and when a second user of the same group does a search with the same search term, the record will no longer be part of the list of results. Applicants respectfully submit that Hansen et al. fail to teach or suggest the concept of nomination.

In view of the foregoing, Hansen et al. do not anticipate the current invention and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

With regarding to the rejections of claims 7, 17, 24 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), claim 7 is dependent upon claim 1, claim 17 is dependent upon claim 11, claim 24 is dependent upon claim 18 and claim 30 is dependent upon claim 25. The dependent claims are believed allowable for the same reasons stated above regarding those independent claims, as well as for their own additional features.

Applicants respectfully submit that the application as presented is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is necessary in order to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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